the seriousness of the situation which faced the country, and on their competence to deal with it.

If, however, Cabinet Ministers remained divided, the Conservative Party's preponderance in the New Parliament gave it a preponderating influence in the Government. Sir Herbert Samuel's views might be listened to respectfully, but a threat to resign represented his only means of protest if they were disregarded. His little band of followers could not appreciably influence a division; other Liberals, led by Sir John Simon, had made it clear that there was no conceivable issue which might be expected to lead to their resignation. Like Charles II, they had been on their travels, and now, unexpectedly restored to office, were determined to travel no more. As for National Labour—it was an army with no rank-and-file, but only staff officers. The distribution of a few honours would keep sweet its small contingent outside the Cabinet, and those in the Cabinet could be relied on to efface themselves, until death, or some accident like the disclosure of Budget secrets, led to their places being vacated.

The immediate difficulty was Sir Herbert Samuel's conscientious scruples about associating himself with a change in fiscal policy of which he did not approve. For him to resign so soon after the General Election would have been inconvenient; to abandon, or even postpone, the imposition of tariffs would deprive the Government of the only measure a majority of its supporters actively wished to see introduced.

Sir Herbert remained adamant. Useless to point out to him that in a Government like theirs give and take was

essential; that no drastic change was proposed, but only an experiment (that persuasive word,[2] made to cover so much; so many experiments —Tariff, League, Soviet, Nazi; experimental appeasement, to be followed by experimental war), which, if successful, might be continued, if unsuccessful, discontinued. He would not budge.

[2] Its equivalent, in the preceding generation, was 'reform'. Thus what was called in Joseph Chamberlain's day Tariff Reform, was called in his son's the Tariff Experiment.